



April 17, 2015

Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

In recent months, a large number of constituents have contacted our offices with issues concerning the Federal Communications Commission's Lifeline Program. In the last two years, the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC") and the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau ("Bureau") created a recertification process and amended it a year later, causing confusion amongst recipients. The most recent amendment (DA 14-303) allows eligible telecommunications carriers ("ETCs") to elect USAC to perform the Lifeline recertification process. Verizon opted for USAC to perform the recertification process. In November 2014, millions of Verizon's Lifeline subscribers received the recertification letter and form from USAC instead of Verizon.

Since January 2015, our offices noticed a pattern of those that had issues with Lifeline Program. A vast majority of them were seniors with limited English proficiency (LEP). They were longtime Lifeline recipients of Verizon's program and Verizon discontinued their Lifeline benefits without prior notice. Finally, when we inquired about recertification, the seniors said they never received any recertification forms from Verizon.

Thirty-seven percent of New York City's population is foreign born and over 48 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Yet, the recertification form is only available in English. In addition, the recertification letter, which is separate from the form, is only available in English and Spanish. There is no indication in any other languages that the information subscribers are receiving from USAC will affect their Verizon telephone service. When asked about translated forms and letters, representatives from USAC indicated that a directive must come from the FCC and the Bureau.

That is why we request that the Federal Communications Commission and the Bureau work with USAC to revise the recertification guidelines and include multilingual notices informing subscribers of how the recertification process will affect their service, as well as multilingual applications. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the most vulnerable New Yorkers can continue to be connected through the Lifeline Program.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact New York City Council Member Margaret Chin at (212) 587-3150, New York State Assemblywoman Nily Rozic at (718) 820-0241, or New York State Senator Daniel Squadron at (212) 298-5565.

Sincerely,

Margaret S. Chin
New York City Council Member

Nily Rozic
New York State Assemblywoman

Daniel Squadron
New York State Senator

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Toby Ann Stavisky
New York State Senator

Peter J. Abbate, Jr.
New York State Assemblyman

Edward C. Braunstein
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Sheldon Silver
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Jimmy Van Bramer
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